



- **Benedict XVI on the feast of St Dominic at his general audience at Castel Gandolfo**

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today the Church celebrates the memory of St. Dominic de Guzman, priest and founder of the Order of Preachers, the Dominicans. In a previous catechesis, I already illustrated this noble figure and the vital contribution he made to the renewal of the Church of his time. Today, I would like to bring to light an essential aspect of spirituality: his life of prayer. St. Dominic was a man of prayer. In love with God, his only aspiration was the salvation of souls, especially those who, at the time, had fallen into heresy; in imitation of Christ, he radically embodied the three evangelical counsels uniting the proclamation of the Word with witness to a life of poverty, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he progressed along the path of Christian perfection. In every moment, prayer was the force that renewed and rendered fruitful his apostolic works.

Blessed Jordan of Saxony (who died in 1237), his successor as head of the Order, thus writes: "During the day, no-one was more sociable than he... conversely at night, no one more diligent in keeping vigil in prayer. He devoted his days to others, but the night he gave to God" (P. Filippini, *Domenico visto dai suoi contemporanei*, Bologna 1982, p 133). In St. Dominic we can see an example of the harmonious integration of contemplation of the divine mysteries and apostolic activity. According to the testimonies of those closest to him, "he always spoke with God or of God." This observation indicates his deep communion with the Lord and at the same time, a continued commitment to lead others to this communion with God. He did not leave writings on prayer, but the Dominican tradition collected and handed down his living experience in a work entitled: *The Nine Ways of Prayer of St. Dominic*. This was composed between 1260 and 1288 by a Dominican friar, it helps us to understand something of the Saint's inner life, it also helps us in all our differences to learn something about how to pray.

There are therefore, nine ways of praying according to the Saint, and each of these was always carried out in front of Jesus Crucified, and express a corporal and spiritual attitude, that intimately interpenetrating, favor recollection and fervor. The first seven ways follow an ascending line, like the steps of a journey, towards an intimate communion with God, with the Trinity: St. Dominic prayed standing, bowing to express humility, lying prostrate on the ground to ask forgiveness for his sins, on his knees in penance to participate in the sufferings of the Lord, with his arms open staring at the crucifix to contemplate the Supreme Love, with his gaze directed towards the heavens feeling himself drawn towards the world of God. Therefore there are three forms, standing, on ones' knees, lying prostrate on the ground, but always with our gaze toward the Crucified Lord.

However, I would like to pause briefly on the last two ways which correspond to two forms of piety that the Saint normally practiced. First, personal meditation, where prayer acquires a more intimate, fervent and soothing dimension. At the end of the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours, and after the celebration of Mass, St. Dominic prolonged his conversation with God, without any time limits. He would sit in an attitude of quite recollection and listening, reading a book or staring at the Crucifix. He lived these moments of his relationship with God so intensely that his reactions of joy or tears were outwardly perceptible. Thus he assimilated this through the reality of faith. Witnesses

say that at times he would go into a sort of ecstasy, his face transfigured, but immediately afterwards he would humbly resume his daily activities recharged by the power that comes from on High. Then prayer while traveling between one monastery or another, he would recite Lauds, Sext, Vespers with companions, and, crossing the valleys and hills, contemplate the beauty of creation. At such times a hymn of praise and thanksgiving to God for so many gifts would gush from his heart, especially for the greatest wonder of all: the redemption accomplished by Christ.

Dear friends, St. Dominic reminds us that at the origin of witnessing to the faith, which every Christian should give in the family, at work, in society, and even in moments of relaxation, is prayer, a personal contact with God; only this real relationship with God gives us the strength to live every event, especially the most suffered moments, intensely. This saint reminds us of the importance of external attitudes in our prayers. That to kneel, to stand before the Lord, to fix our gaze on the Crucifix, to pause and gather ourselves in silence, is not a secondary act, but helps to us to place ourselves, our whole person, in relation to God. Once again, I would like draw attention to the need to find moments to pray quietly everyday for our spiritual life, we particularly have to take this time for ourselves during our vacation, to have time for this attempt to talk with God. This is also a way to help those who are near to us to enter into the luminous rays of the presence of God, who brings the peace and love that we all need.

- **"W drodze" on wealth**

Does God like rich people? You will find answers in the September issue of 'W drodze' magazine, which is published by Polish dominicans

In one of several interviews on this subject, a renowned Polish theologian Fr. Prof. Józef Naumowicz tells Anna Sosnowska: Jesus did not see anything wrong in being anointed by a woman with costly oil. It means that he gathered rich people around himself, not only the „proletariat” as previously assumed. Nowhere in the Gospel does Jesus condemn people for having material goods and he never praises poverty. Poverty can be valuable but only if it is accepted freely for the Kingdom of God.

How is the vow of poverty currently being fulfilled at the oldest Polish Dominican monastery in Cracow? The Cracow prior, Fr. Pawel Kozacki OP is not afraid to admit that he is in charge of a wealthy monastery. He also writes sincerely that the poverty of religious people brings endless questions and problems which have to be solved. For example, how much should a Dominican pay for a pair of trousers? Fr. Kozacki is a realist when he writes: Sell all your possessions – this call sounds beautiful and attractive, but practically speaking, it's works at its best just during the lifetime of one generation of radical apostles. The history of religious orders and communities shows us that we can only live like that as long as we are young and healthy.

Not only priests share their thoughts about prosperity, but also two lay professionals. The Economist Dariusz Winek warns against living for more that one can earn in the name of consumerism. Roman Bielecki OP, the Editor-in-Chief talks with Leszek Likus who is one of the wealthiest people in Poland. Likus says: Poverty or lack of property do not make us saints. It may sound trivial, but one can have nothing and still be an awful scrooge while another can have a lot and be a person with a sensitive heart.

This chapter of the magazine is summed up by a touching report by Stanislaw Zasada on the Good Shepherd Community from Katowice, Poland, which help people suffering from material, emotional and spiritual poverty.

In the September issue you will also find three articles about contemporary sacred architecture. According to one of the authors, Piotr Marciniak, present-day churches reflect the complexity and diversity of our times.

As usual, the magazine *W drodze* includes film and book reviews, comments on Sunday readings, and a regular column by a well-known Dominican, Fr. Jacek Salij OP. This time his text may make many readers feel uncomfortable since the author writes about marriages which can be complete failures, but which in God's eyes are still sacred and worthy.

- **“Herod feared John....”**

Today's feast, alternately called “The Passion of Saint John the Baptist,” “The Martyrdom of Saint John the Baptist,” and “The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist,” is not only a reminder to “keep one's head” and not overindulge in food and drink when entertaining and making merry—it also reminds us that it is neither losing our good reputation nor the threat of man that we should fear, but God alone.

In the Gospel for today, we read that “Herod feared John, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man, and kept him in custody” (Mk 6:20). Perhaps we can look on Herod and feel a tinge of sympathy—he had arrested John to keep him near to himself. John's teaching made him curious, and if it hadn't been for Herod's desire to save face after getting carried away in his merriment, John would have remained alive and Herod might have received the gift of faith and accepted the Gospel. If, however, Herod had been more concerned with doing what was right before God, fearing God's punishment rather than the loss of his own credibility and reputation in front of his friends and subjects, he wouldn't even have been in such a predicament. What can we make of Herod's “misplaced” fear of John?

In the *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas distinguishes four different kinds of fear: worldly, servile, initial, and filial. He says, “These three fears [servile, initial, and worldly] regard punishment but in different ways. For worldly or human fear regards a punishment which turns man away from God, and which God's enemies sometimes inflict or threaten: whereas servile and initial fear regard a punishment whereby men are drawn to God, and which is inflicted or threatened by God.” Filial fear is based upon charity, and can be described as a kind of “ordered” fear, where a man fears the one to whom he submits himself, such as a son to a father.

Herod did not fear God, but man. He feared that John was more powerful than himself and could inflict God's judgment over him. Herod knew that keeping John in custody was really just a show, that he really had no power over John, for we read that it was on account of Herodias that he kept him in prison (Mk 6:17). But if Herod had feared God, he would have feared being separated from Him, feared His justice and punishment for having married his brother's wife.

Every day we make decisions based on different kinds of fear. We wake up earlier to beat the traffic to work because we fear the punishment of garnished wages, loss of productivity, or of being fired. We choose water or juice instead of soda for fear of detriment to our health. We lock our doors at night for fear of an intruder and the harm he could do to our family. Many of these choices are healthy and good, and serve to glorify God through prudent choices and care and concern for those we love, including ourselves.

When, however, we find ourselves making decisions based on fear of man—because our reputation might be tarnished for being seen as too devout, or because we'll be excluded from future events with people we care about—we lose our perspective and forget that we are made for God, both in

this life and in the life we will have with Him after Jesus' glorious return. This means there is no need to fear what another man will say about us or do to us, since justice is God's to dispense, and His justice is far greater than the harm done to our reputation. When we seek to please God, even in the minutiae of our daily lives, and treat Him as our friend Whom we speak with throughout the day, the motivation for our actions moves further from fear and closer to charity.

Herod heard John's preaching and knew of the justice of God, yet he chose to fear his loss of reputation instead of believing in the God that John preached. His decision to "save face" in front of his friends was profoundly foolish. As Christians who, in the midst of daily life, must evaluate our actions and decisions based on the truth of the Gospel, let us keep the wisdom of Solomon in mind: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov 1:7).

Bro. Raphael Forbing, OP

- **St. Catherine of Siena: A Woman for Our Times**

"I never would have guessed when I entered religious life that I would be doing this," smiles Nancy Murray, OP, about her 12-years-and-counting run in a one-woman show, "Catherine of Siena: A Woman for Our Times." While on the surface it may seem somewhat unusual for a nun to be an actress, it actually makes a lot of sense when you consider the family she comes from. Four of her siblings also act—most famously her brother Bill, the Oscar-nominated star of "Lost in Translation" and dozens of other movies. "He said one day: 'People have been sending me all these articles about you,' and I said: "Great! All these years they've been sending them to me about you'."

Sister Nancy will perform the two-hour show as a fundraiser for the Mariandale Retreat and Conference Center in Ossining, New York, on Sunday, Oct. 14 at 12:30 p.m. She wrote the show at the behest of a panel for the Dominican Leadership Conference (DLC) in 2000. Based on recent translations of 400 letters in which the 14th century Italian saint debated political and church issues of the day with princes, cardinals and popes, it shows Catherine as a precocious but rebellious child in a large Tuscan family who grew up to be a "radical feminist" with lots of spunk and humor, says Sister Nancy.

Catherine wielded extraordinary influence for a woman of her time, and is credited with helping to influence Pope Gregory XI to bring the Papacy back from Avignon to Rome and to reform the clergy. Catherine, who died at 33, is a Doctor of the Church and, with St. Dominic, considered a co-founder of the Dominican Order. "She was strong and feisty," Sister Nancy says, "but her affection was irresistible."

And why does Sister Nancy call her "a woman for our times"? Parallels abound, says Sister Nancy, between St. Catherine's 14th century world and ours—including a health scourge (the plague then, AIDS now), wars, a failure to take care of the poor and, of course, troubles within the church.

Catherine, in Sister Nancy's words, "will ever be the voice of the humble, the one who speaks truth to power." And playing her onstage so many times has inevitably affected Sister Nancy: "I can't keep doing her lines without saying 'I've got to write to the government'" to protest or to plead for something she believes in—such as helping the poor. When she is not onstage, Sister Nancy works in a shelter in Chicago, doing the women's laundry, or with migrant children.

While she isn't planning to doff St. Catherine's habit just yet, Sister Nancy is starting to branch out a bit. The Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur have asked her to tell the story of Sister Dorothy

Stang—an advocate of the rural poor in the Brazilian rainforest who was murdered by two ranchers for her convictions—and she is working on a script for a play about Karen Klimczak, the Sister of St. Joseph who worked tirelessly on behalf of ex-prisoners—and who was murdered on Good Friday, 2006, by a parolee.

“People love stories,” observes Sister Nancy, “and these are stories they need to hear.”

“St. Catherine of Siena: A Woman for Our Times” will be performed at Mariandale Retreat and Conference Center, a sponsored ministry of the Dominican Sisters of Hope, in Ossining, New York, on Sunday, Oct. 14. Tickets are \$35 for a matinee and lunch. There will be two seatings, first seating 11:30 lunch and 12:30 matinee, second seating 12:30 matinee and 2:30 lunch. Call (914) 941-4455 for more information or reservations or visit [www.mariandale.org](http://www.mariandale.org).

By Alison Faubert, communications director for the Dominican Sisters of Hope

- **St Augustine: Ever Ancient and New**

I still remember the first time I encountered the writings of St. Augustine. I was taking a class called “Augustine and Aquinas” in college and had to read Augustine’s Confessions alongside Aquinas’s Compendium of Theology. The difference between the two was striking. Compare Aquinas and Augustine on man’s last end:

“Our natural desire for knowledge cannot come to rest within us until we know the first cause, and that not in any way, but in its very essence. This first cause is God. Consequently, the ultimate end of an intellectual creature is the vision of God in His Essence”. (Compendium, 104)

And now Augustine:

“You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you”. (Confessions, I.1)

Which one do you think captivated a college student in search of God?

Now I admit that this is being a little unfair to St. Thomas; he was writing at a different time, to a different audience, with a different goal. In Pope Leo XIII’s encyclical *Aeterni Patris* Augustine is credited with “wresting the palm” from all the early Church Fathers. “Of a most powerful genius and thoroughly saturated with sacred and profane learning, with the loftiest faith and with equal knowledge, he combated most vigorously all the errors of his age.” But it is St. Thomas who is said to gather together and increase with his own additions all Scholastic teaching such that “he is rightly and deservedly esteemed the special bulwark and glory of the Catholic faith.” Indeed, “Reason, borne on the wings of Thomas to its human height, can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she has already obtained through Thomas.” St. Thomas, not St. Augustine, is the theological master recommended by Pope Leo XIII to the entire Church.

And yet on the feast of St. Augustine it is appropriate to reflect on his ongoing significance and extremely wide reach. I do not think my initial reaction to St. Augustine was unique; his theological thought and style has captivated so many throughout history and continues to bear fruit in contemplation today.

The Holy Roman Emperor Charlemagne was so taken with St. Augustine's City of God that he slept with it under his pillow. In Peter Lombard's Sentences St. Augustine is quoted ten to fifteen times as often as any other Church Father, and in St. Thomas's Summa Theologiae, it is St. Augustine who is the most referenced authority after the Bible. St. Thomas's reverence for St. Augustine was so profound that even when he holds quite a different opinion he refuses to criticize him!

This Augustinian influence did not relax after the Middle Ages. It was an Augustinian friar (Martin Luther) who started the Reformation, and its greatest systematizer, John Calvin, famously proclaimed, *Augustinus . . . totus noster est* ("Augustine is totally ours"). The Reformed theologian B. B. Warfield declared, "It is Augustine who gave us the Reformation. For the Reformation, inwardly considered, was just the ultimate triumph of Augustine's doctrine of grace over Augustine's doctrine of the Church." St. Augustine was on both sides of the debate!

Following the Reformation, St. Augustine still held preeminence in the minds of many influential thinkers. In the seventeenth century both René Descartes and Blaise Pascal saw him as the foundation of their own philosophical and theological projects—even though they were fundamentally at odds with one another (Pascal: "Descartes useless and uncertain"). In the nineteenth century Friedrich Nietzsche wrote *The Genealogy of Morals*, which can be best described as St. Augustine's City of God argued backwards. The twentieth century saw St. Augustine's Confessions as the model for both religious and secular autobiographies: American Trappist monk Thomas Merton's *The Seven Storey Mountain* is contrasted with French philosopher Jacques Derrida's *Circumfessions*. And let us not forget that it is St. Augustine who tops the citation list of ecclesiastical writers in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

St. Augustine seems to have a timeless influence, an ability to speak across millennia and around the globe. He has been called the first medieval, the first modern, the first existentialist, the first autobiographer. It appears he has followed St. Paul's dictum in being "all things to all men." He has taught the world about God and its relationship to Him, historically and cosmologically. He has helped the Church understand the Trinity, the sacraments, and the doctrine of grace (he is, after all, the Doctor Gratiae). And if history is any indication, he will go on teaching the world, the Church, and each one of us about ourselves and our deepest desire for God.

In Book X of his Confessions St. Augustine says of God, "Late have I loved you, beauty so ancient and so new." Perhaps we can say something similar about St. Augustine himself: "Always have we loved you, teacher so ancient and so new."

Bro. Bonaventure Chapman, OP

- **Mortifications for the Faint of Heart**

Today we are celebrating the sainthood of Rose of Lima. St. Rose is a fellow Dominican, who died at the age of 31 in the year 1617. She also has the mark of being the first saint canonized from the "New World" or the Americas. St. Rose is most well known for the penances she inflicted upon herself. These included not eating meat or fruit for most of her life, sleeping on a bed strewn with rocks and broken glass when she was not depriving herself of sleep altogether, wearing a crown of thorns concealed by roses or her habit veil, and living in a tiny hermitage in her parents' backyard.

These are shocking to read about in a way. Why on earth would someone inflict such pain and torture on herself? Her penances might even lead someone to accuse her of abusing her body, her own temple of the Holy Spirit!

But St. Rose's penances served many purposes. Firstly, they helped her to unite her sufferings to that of Jesus Christ's passion and death. Secondly, regarding the severity of her penances, we must remember that she had received very special graces from God to perform such penitential exercises. This grace seems to date back even to Rose's childhood when, upon having a very bad earache and being asked if she was in pain, her reply was: "Yes, a little, but our Lord's crown of thorns must have hurt much more." But for all her mortifications, she never allowed them to affect anyone but herself, and continued to work diligently to help support the family by growing and selling flowers and sewing embroidery work.

Saints like Rose of Lima who are so deeply united to Christ's passion are sometimes disheartening for us. We can barely bring ourselves to skip a television show from time to time, pass on an extra helping of a favorite food, or even leave a joke unsaid. In turn, we often think that our mortifications or little penances cannot measure up to such heights of sanctity as Rose of Lima's.

But every mortification, no matter how little, is directed at our only end, God. So that alone can take the smallest mortification or penance and unite it to the ultimate mortification and penance ever undertaken, the death of God, by the hands of his own creatures! The Dominican Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange spoke very eloquently on the power of mortification:

Christian mortification, far from debasing our personality, exalts it to such a point that it renders us independent of the world, its maxims, its theories, its fashions, its foolishness, and its snares. It exalts our soul above everything created, permitting us to depend only on ourselves and on God. In the measure that it makes our dependence on God closer, it develops our personality, rendering it more like the divine personality of Christ. What personality is more marvelous than that of the saints? It goes beyond the limits of time and space, and after the passing centuries it imposes itself on the admiration of the crowds without the help of any human means, but solely through the superiority of wisdom and charity.

I bet no one reading this post sleeps on rocks and glass, but that doesn't mean we can't do penance. We can skip that candy bar or perhaps have a commute without the radio or stop following our favorite team for a week or two, all for the love of Jesus Christ. In the almost 400 years that have passed since the death of St. Rose, people have admired her mortifications as signs of her wisdom and charity, not as signs of her superhuman will. So as you and I carry on in our desire to follow the words of Jesus from the Gospel of Matthew, "Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt 16:24), let us ask for the intercession of St. Rose of Lima to take our little mortifications and present them to God as if they were her own!

St. Rose of Lima, pray for us!

Br. John Maria Devaney, O.P.

- **The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

"She is queen precisely by loving us", Benedict XVI

Dear brothers and sisters,

Today marks the liturgical memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, invoked under the title: "Queen." It is a feast of recent institution, even though it is ancient in its origin and devotion: It was established by the Venerable Pius XII in 1954, at the conclusion of the Marian Year; its date was set

at May 31 (cf. Lett. Enc. Ad caeli Reginam, 11 Octobris 1954: AAS 46 [1954], 625-640). On this occasion, the Pope stated that Mary is Queen above every other creature on account of the elevation of her soul and the excellence of the gifts she received. She never ceases to bestow all the treasures of her love and care on humanity (cf. Speech in honor of Queen Mary, 1 November 1954). Now, following the post-conciliar reform of the liturgical calendar, it has been placed eight days after the Solemnity of the Assumption, in order to emphasize the close bond between Mary's queenship and her glorification in body and soul next to her Son. In the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church, we read: "Mary was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, and exalted by the Lord as Queen of the universe, that she might be the more fully conformed to her Son" (Lumen Gentium, 59).

This is the root of today's feast: Mary is Queen because of her unique association to her Son, both during her earthly journey as well as in heavenly glory. The great saint of Syria, Ephrem of Syria, said regarding the queenship of Mary that it derives from her maternity: She is Mother of the Lord, of the King of kings (cf. Is 9:1-6), and she points to Jesus as our life, salvation and our hope. The Servant of God Paul VI recalled in his apostolic exhortation *Marialis Cultus*: "In the Virgin Mary everything is relative to Christ and dependent upon Him. It was with a view to Christ that God the Father from all eternity chose her to be the all-holy Mother and adorned her with gifts of the Spirit granted to no one else" (n. 25).

But now we may ask ourselves: What does it mean that Mary is Queen? Is it merely a title along with others, the crown, an ornament like others? What does it mean? What is this queenship? As already noted, it is a consequence of her being united with her Son, of her being in heaven, i.e. in communion with God. She participates in God's responsibilities over the world and in God's love for the world. There is the commonly held idea that a king or queen should be person with power and riches. But this is not the kind of royalty proper to Jesus and Mary. Let us think of the Lord: The Lordship and Kingship of Christ is interwoven with humility, service and love: it is, above all else, to serve, to assist, to love. Let us recall that Jesus was proclaimed king on the Cross, with this inscription written by Pilate: "King of the Jews" (cf. Mark 15:26). In that moment on the Cross it is revealed that He is king. And how is he king? By suffering with us, for us, by loving us to the end; it is in this way that he governs and creates truth, love and justice. Or let us also think of another moment: at the Last Supper, he bends down to wash the feet of his disciples. Therefore, the kingship of Jesus has nothing to do with that which belongs to the powerful of the earth. He is a king who serves his servants; he showed this throughout his life. And the same is true for Mary. She is queen in God's service to humanity. She is the queen of love, who lives out her gift of self to God in order to enter into His plan of salvation for man. To the angel she responds: Behold the handmaid of the Lord (cf. Luke 1:38), and in the Magnificat she sings: God has looked upon the lowliness of His handmaid (cf. Luke 1:48). She helps us. She is queen precisely by loving us, by helping us in every one of our needs; she is our sister, a humble handmaid.

Thus we have arrived at the point: How does Mary exercise this queenship of service and love? By watching over us, her children: the children who turn to her in prayer, to thank her and to ask her maternal protection and her heavenly help, perhaps after having lost their way, or weighed down by suffering and anguish on account of the sad and troubled events of life. In times of serenity or in the darkness of life we turn to Mary, entrusting ourselves to her continual intercession, so that from her Son we may obtain every grace and mercy necessary for our pilgrimage along the paths of the world. To Him who rules the world and holds the destinies of the universe in His hands we turn with confidence, through the Virgin Mary. For centuries she has been invoked as the Queen of heaven; eight times, after the prayer of the holy Rosary, she is implored in the Litany of Loreto as Queen of the Angels, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, of all Saints and of Families. The rhythm of this ancient invocation, and daily prayers such as the *Salve Regina*, help

us to understand that the Holy Virgin, as our Mother next to her Son Jesus in the glory of Heaven, is always with us, in the daily unfolding of our lives.

The title of Queen is therefore a title of trust, of joy and of love. And we know that what she holds in her hands for the fate of the world is good; she loves us, and she helps us in our difficulties.

Dear friends, devotion to Our Lady is an important element in our spiritual lives. In our prayer, let us not neglect to turn trustfully to her. Mary will not neglect to intercede for us next to her Son. In looking to her, let us imitate her faith, her complete availability to God's plan of love, her generous welcoming of Jesus. Let us learn to live by Mary. Mary is the Queen of heaven who is close to God, but she is also the Mother who is close to each one of us, who loves us and who listens to our voice. Thank you for your attention.

[Translation by Diane Montagna - Zenith]

### The Current Queen

Today the Church celebrates the Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Since we Americans do not live under a monarchy, it might be tempting for us to think of a queen as a merely historical personage, as someone whose influence is frozen in the past. But this is not the case with the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was a real, historical person, who walked the earth about two thousand years ago, but she is not limited to history. She still lives, body and soul, in heaven, and even now her powerful intercession brings about real effects in our lives and in our world. By celebrating her Queenship, the Church draws our attention to this fact. Mary is a queen whose reign has not ceased and never will cease.

During college, I was in a small Catholic reading group, and in various books we kept coming across stories of conversions brought about by Our Lady's intercession. Up to that point in my life, I thought that most conversions were brought about by intellectual means or, perhaps, through a serious illness. I figured that Our Lady's role in conversion was almost always remote or imperceptible. Accordingly, I posed a question to the reading group: "Does anyone know someone who was converted to the Catholic faith due to Mary's intercession?"

To my amazement, not only were there a plenitude of stories, but they were all personal. One friend explained that she grew up as a Jehovah's Witness but began praying to Mary; soon after, she was led to the faith. Another friend explained how he grew up Protestant, but as a child always felt jealous of Catholics because of their devotion to Mary. When he defiantly decided to pray to Mary anyway, he was led to the Church. Three others who had grown up Catholic shared stories of being given a miraculous medal; they explained that this had been the turning point for them, the time when they began to take "ownership" of their faith.

There I sat, thinking that conversions through Mary's intercession were a thing of medieval religious lore, and moments later I was inundated by these personal testimonies. And they were testimonies not just to the influence of a theory or an idea; they were stories that made it abundantly clear that Our Lady herself had been at work in the lives of the people surrounding me.

It seems safe to say that the blessed are given knowledge of the people for whom they have special concern. For example, a mother in heaven knows the welfare of her children on earth. Well, Mary has been given to us as a mother. In effect, Jesus spoke to all the faithful when, hanging on the

cross, he said to St. John, "Behold your Mother." Just as, on earth, Mary acted as Mother to the early Church—for instance, when she prayed for the coming of the Spirit with the Apostles in the upper room—so, in heaven, she cares for and has been given knowledge of all of her pilgrim children. We, who are so often mourning and weeping in this valley of tears, have the great consolation of knowing that Mary, our Queen and Mother, hears us whenever we call to her. "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

Bro. Raymund Snyder, OP

- **The Dominican Mission in the Arab World**

Fr. Amir Jaje OP. is the first Arab brother to be the Provincial Vicar of the Vicariate of the Arab World. He was born in Karakosh in Iraq. He has a doctorate in History of Religions and he teaches at the Theological Faculty of Babel College. This is an extract from his interview with frs Prakash Lohale, OP (Socius for Apostolic Life) and Gabriel Samba, OP (Socius for Africa) at Santa Sabina, Rome.

fr Prakash: As the Vicar for the entire Arab World, what are your apostolates and in which countries?

fr Amir: The Vicariate of the Arab World comprises three Arab countries.

Egypt - In Egypt we have seven brothers whose principal task is to serve as a "bridge" between the Islamic/Oriental World and Christianity through the Islamic-Christian dialogue. There are eight brothers in Cairo. We have a huge library there which is used as a tool for study and dialogue. The library is used by both Christian and Islamic students even from Al-Azhar (the supreme college of Sunnite Islam).

Algeria - At the moment there are only two brothers at Tlemcen. The brothers work with youths as a way of living-dialogue. The brothers have also done a great job with the documentation of the martyrs of Algeria.

Iraq - There are two convents, one in Mossoul founded in 1750, so the Dominicans have been in Iraq since then. Initially, there were Italian brothers but since 1850, we have had French brothers. They are actively involved in formation. About 40 years ago we started having Iraqi Dominican vocations. Now there are five brothers; one is in Fribourg (Switzerland) doing his doctorate while the others are in Karakosh. In Karakosh, we have a Centre of Archives and the Novitiate since 2005 which is an idea initiated by Fr Timothy Radcliffe, OP, former Master of the Order.

There is also a convent in Baghdad with five brothers. The brothers have a publication, "Pensée Chrétienne" (Christian Thought) which has been in existence for the past 48 years. This is an important Christian Review in Arabic with a large followership especially among Christian Arabs in the diaspora. Another important project is that of an "Open University" which started five or six years ago. This is indeed a prophetic apostolate which contributes to the reconstruction of the country in no small way.

We are conscious of the fact that Christians are very few in this country, from around 1.2million (3%) to about 600,000 today. In this situation, it is better to do something in the Human Sciences, that is, theology and other subjects that can help in the rehabilitation of the person. So Dominican brothers work side by side with Muslims, university scholars who are very open to dialogue and

change. We have other brothers who are studying and preparing to come back to Iraq. There are 2 brothers in Lyons, 3 brothers in Strasbourg and one in Lille.

fr Prakash: What are the challenges of working in different ministries in different countries?

fr Amir: Indeed, they are three different countries with different realities. We preach, and we try to serve the cause of the unity of the Churches. In Iraq there are several religions with different rites but we work and live together. Part of our work is to promote unity among the Churches amidst the difficulties, rivalries and conflicts. In Egypt the brothers do hardly any parish work, they are caught up in the field of Islamic-Christian study and dialogue. In Algeria, as the reality of the Church is very limited, the brothers have to work with Muslims in a day-to-day fashion by living the human values with them. So there are three different realities which, for me, are complementary.

During our next Vicariate Assembly (24 Sept-1st Oct, 2012), we will discuss precisely the differences and complementarity that exist in our apostolates in the Vicariate. We will also discuss common grounds like the "Arab Spring" and dialogue with the Evangelical Churches. There are many Evangelical Churches in Iraq now, we need to discuss how to work together with them. Really, the diversity in our apostolates is rather a blessing.

fr Gabriel: What are your major challenges and perspectives for the future?

fr Amir: I think Islam is very present to each one of us since we represent only a tiny minority, be it in Egypt, Iraq or even in Algeria where the Christian reality is a foreign conception. We each live differently with Islam and there are certain realities we have to grapple with. Do the brothers of the Vicariate believe in the future of Christianity and the Order in the Arab world? What should they do and what can they do? What message can they transmit? That is the real challenge, to be as Dominicans a "bridge" between Islam and Christianity.

We must strive to give a true image of Islam to the Western world because our experience of Islam is based on lived facts. We have brothers who believe in the future of our presence, who believe that we can collaborate despite the difficulties and this is most important for the mission of the Order. Ours is a unique vocation. On one side, we give to the Muslims a different image of Christianity and also present to the Western world a true image of Islam. For example, I teach Christianity in their Muslim Shiite Theological Faculty and a Muslim scholar also teaches our future priests at Babel College. It is very important to allow someone to present his own religion because he will do it from faith and lived experience and not just from learning.

fr Gabriel: How do you deal with the problem of massive exodus of Christians? Also, how do you work with Lay Dominicans?

fr Amir: In Iraq obviously, Christians have been persecuted because Fundamentalist Islamists have plans to empty Iraq of Christians. They talk about "purifying" Iraq and all the Middle East of all that is not Islam. The reality of this is that, the number of Christians has reduced greatly. Some Christians see themselves as the Jews who were once numerous but are very few now. In the same vain, some Muslims will say, "Today is Saturday and tomorrow will be Sunday" (meaning, today it's the turn of the Jews and tomorrow, it will be the turn of the Christians). However, some Muslims think otherwise. In Iraq where I live, some Muslims say to me, "You are the flowers in our garden, if you leave, you will leave our gardens with no flowers". This group of Muslims just want a peaceful coexistence with Christians because it has always been like that. But the Fundamentalists always seek to frighten and terrorise Christians to force them to flee.

I maybe too optimistic but it is my hope that Iraq will never be emptied of Christians. There are Christians who are convinced of their mission, of their vocation in those countries and they want to stay even at the expense of their lives. I know many Iraqi Christians who would say; "Even if I die, it does not matter! My death will be a witness". So they do not want to leave and it is because of that, despite the fact that many Christians have left, I think that Iraq will never be emptied of Christians.

Rightly so, we have many lay Dominicans. I spoke to fr David (Socius for the Laity) and we are going to organise his visit to the lay Dominicans. There are about 250 just in Karakosh and in Iraq altogether there are between 500 and 600. They are of varied ages and do a great deal of work. They organise evangelical evenings, they visit families and talk about the Gospel. They pray together every Sunday and also meet twice within the week. They are really active and they have a true Dominican spirituality. They are accompanied on one hand by a brother and also by numerous Dominican Sisters. There are 160 sisters of St Catherine of Siena mostly in Baghdad and about 40 from the Congregation of the Presentation of Tours. Largely, they accompany the lay Dominicans.

fr Prakash: What is the hope of the "Arab Spring" in the midst of increased violence and fundamentalism?

fr Amir: That is a very good question. Personally, I am not really worried. This is because I live here and I know that Muslim fundamentalism is something that works "in reaction" to something else. It only lasts a moment and then it's over. These movements that developed into fundamentalism are only reactions to systems that pretended to be democratic but were in fact dictatorships and people have had enough of being deprived of their freedom. People have lived through 30 to 40 years of dictatorships, whether under Saddam Hussein, Kadhafi, Mubarak or Assad. All these leaders, these heads of state were against fundamentalism but exercised themselves as dictatorial fundamentalists. For my part I think, this was the sort of fundamentalism which destroyed people because it destroyed their freedom.

So, the people have had enough and they would have accepted anything as long as they got rid of these dictators. I think that even if the fundamentalist take over power, we must not be too worried because they will fail. This is because of the increasing importance of the social media and the involvement of the youth. If they apply their ideas, the Sharia, (Islamic law) or their ideologies, people will revolt, they will not accept it, that is for sure. It is too contradictory to secularism and modernity. Personally, I am fairly optimist and I think they will have to renounce the Sharia if they wish to stay in power. Arab people have changed since the time of Mohamed. Today the young are disconnected from this religious system. I was in Iran six months ago and I saw youths completely disconnected from the "Mollah" system. They live in their world of modernity (with Facebook, youtube, playstations etc). Despite the restricted access to the internet, I am afraid that this is only a delayed time bomb because the "Mollahs" are withdrawn into themselves and have no contact with the young.

That is why I am optimist and I think that the Islamists, when they do take power, will not be able to apply the Sharia law.

- **New Dominican chapel in Edinburgh, Scotland**

First Dominican altar dedicated since the Reformation  
Cardinal O'Brien laying the Altar Stone

In Acts 20:9, St Paul recounts how in Troas a man fell out of the window when he was preaching; it must have been a very full room! Sometimes, the Dominican chaplains of St Albert's Catholic Chaplaincy in Edinburgh have feared a reprise of this experience because their first-floor chapel had been filled to capacity, with standing room only. Often students were seen standing on the stairs outside the chapel, and the doors were left open so they could hear the sermon!

So, plans began a few years ago to build a larger chapel but in the same location which is next to the main library of Edinburgh University. Since 1931 the Dominican-run Catholic Chaplaincy in Edinburgh has served the University of Edinburgh, and it now also serves Edinburgh Napier and Queen Margaret Universities.

Last month the Chaplaincy moved into their new chapel which is built in the garden of their Priory of St Albert the Great, located at 24 George Square. This new chapel is the first Dominican chapel to be built in Scotland since the Reformation, and on the feast of the Assumption 2012, Keith Patrick Cardinal O'Brien came to bless the chapel and dedicate the 3.5 tonne stone Altar. This date was fitting because the Order's first priory in Edinburgh, established in 1230, had been the Priory of the Assumption.

The new chapel is purpose-built and its location in the garden makes it more visible and easily accessible to the disabled and infirm. It is also larger, to accommodate the ever-increasing numbers of students and staff who attend Mass and the Divine Office. The new chapel is a beautiful and prayerful space with hand-tooled stonework, a ribbed oak ceiling and oak floor, a baldachino like structure framing the Altar and Crucifix, and a glass apsidal wall with a view of the garden, signifying our Dominican openness to the goodness of God's creation. In many ways the chapel is a 21st-century interpretation of a medieval Dominican church. Like those, this is essentially a single-roomed preaching hall with plain glass (for the early General Chapters of the Order had forbidden stained glass because of their costliness).

The project represents a substantial investment by the English Province of the Order in their mission in Edinburgh, and it marks their confidence in the future of university chaplaincy work. The whole community hopes that this garden chapel will invigorate their outreach to the city, and contribute to the New Evangelization.

Fundraising from the congregation and former students of the chaplaincy proceeded under the name of 'Keeping the Door Open (KTDO). Over £250,000 has been raised locally. The overall project cost is in excess of £1,000,000 so donations will still be warmly welcomed through <http://keepingthedooropen.op.org>

Some photos of the new chapel can be found on their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/KTDOEdinburgh>

- **Facts and Feast of the Assumption**

The Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 15 August; also called in old liturgical books Pausatio, Nativitas (for heaven), Mors, Depositio, Dormitio S. Mariae. This feast has a double object: (1) the happy departure of Mary from this life; (2) the assumption of her body into heaven. It is the principal feast of the Blessed Virgin.

The fact of the Assumption

Regarding the day, year, and manner of Our Lady's death, nothing certain is known. The earliest known literary reference to the Assumption is found in the Greek work *De Obitu S. Dominae*. Catholic faith, however, has always derived our knowledge of the mystery from Apostolic Tradition. Epiphanius (d. 403) acknowledged that he knew nothing definite about it (*Haer.*, lxxix, 11). The dates assigned for it vary between three and fifteen years after Christ's Ascension. Two cities claim to be the place of her departure: Jerusalem and Ephesus. Common consent favours Jerusalem, where her tomb is shown; but some argue in favour of Ephesus. The first six centuries did not know of the tomb of Mary at Jerusalem.

The belief in the corporeal assumption of Mary is founded on the apocryphal treatise *De Obitu S. Dominae*, bearing the name of St. John, which belongs however to the fourth or fifth century. It is also found in the book *De Transitu Virginis*, falsely ascribed to St. Melito of Sardis, and in a spurious letter attributed to St. Denis the Areopagite. If we consult genuine writings in the East, it is mentioned in the sermons of St. Andrew of Crete, St. John Damascene, St. Modestus of Jerusalem and others. In the West, St. Gregory of Tours (*De gloria mart.*, I, iv) mentions it first. The sermons of St. Jerome and St. Augustine for this feast, however, are spurious. St. John of Damascus (*P.G.*, I, 96) thus formulates the tradition of the Church of Jerusalem:

St. Juvenal, Bishop of Jerusalem, at the Council of Chalcedon (451), made known to the Emperor Marcian and Pulcheria, who wished to possess the body of the Mother of God, that Mary died in the presence of all the Apostles, but that her tomb, when opened, upon the request of St. Thomas, was found empty; wherefrom the Apostles concluded that the body was taken up to heaven.

Today, the belief in the corporeal assumption of Mary is universal in the East and in the West; according to Benedict XIV (*De Festis B.V.M.*, I, viii, 18) it is a probable opinion, which to deny were impious and blasphemous.

### The feast of the Assumption

Regarding the origin of the feast we are also uncertain. It is more probably the anniversary of the dedication of some church than the actual anniversary of Our Lady's death. That it originated at the time of the Council of Ephesus, or that St. Damasus introduced it in Rome is only a hypothesis.

According to the life of St. Theodosius (d. 529) it was celebrated in Palestine before the year 500, probably in August (Baeumer, *Brevier*, 185). In Egypt and Arabia, however, it was kept in January, and since the monks of Gaul adopted many usages from the Egyptian monks (Baeumer, *Brevier*, 163), we find this feast in Gaul in the sixth century, in January [*mediante mense undecimo* (*Greg. Turon.*, *De gloria mart.*, I, ix)]. The Gallican Liturgy has it on the 18th of January, under the title: *Depositio, Assumptio, or Festivitas S. Mariae* (cf. the notes of Mabillon on the Gallican Liturgy, *P.L.*, LXXII, 180). This custom was kept up in the Gallican Church to the time of the introduction of the Roman rite. In the Greek Church, it seems, some kept this feast in January, with the monks of Egypt; others in August, with those of Palestine; wherefore the Emperor Maurice (d. 602), if the account of the "*Liber Pontificalis*" (II, 508) be correct, set the feast for the Greek Empire on 15 August.

In Rome (*Batiffol*, *Brev. Rom.*, 134) the oldest and only feast of Our Lady was 1 January, the octave of Christ's birth. It was celebrated first at Santa Maria Maggiore, later at Santa Maria ad Martyres. The other feasts are of Byzantine origin. Duchesne thinks (*Origines du culte chr.*, 262) that before the seventh century no other feast was kept at Rome, and that consequently the feast of the Assumption, found in the sacramentaries of Gelasius and Gregory, is a spurious addition made in the eighth or seventh century. Probst, however (*Sacramentarien*, 264 sqq.), brings forth good

arguments to prove that the Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary, found on the 15th of August in the Gelasianum, is genuine, since it does not mention the corporeal assumption of Mary; that, consequently, the feast was celebrated in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore at Rome at least in the sixth century. He proves, furthermore, that the Mass of the Gregorian Sacramentary, such as we have it, is of Gallican origin (since the belief in the bodily assumption of Mary, under the influence of the apocryphal writings, is older in Gaul than in Rome), and that it supplanted the old Gelasian Mass. At the time of Sergius I (700) this feast was one of the principal festivities in Rome; the procession started from the church of St. Hadrian. It was always a double of the first class and a Holy Day of obligation.

The octave was added in 847 by Leo IV; in Germany this octave was not observed in several dioceses up to the time of the Reformation. The Church of Milan has not accepted it up to this day (Ordo Ambros., 1906). The octave is privileged in the dioceses of the provinces of Sienna, Fermo, Michoacan, etc.

The Greek Church continues this feast to 23 August, inclusive, and in some monasteries of Mount Athos it is protracted to 29 August (Menaea Graeca, Venice, 1880), or was, at least, formerly. In the dioceses of Bavaria a thirtieth day (a species of month's mind) of the Assumption was celebrated during the Middle Ages, 13 Sept., with the Office of the Assumption (double); today, only the Diocese of Augsburg has retained this old custom.

Some of the Bavarian dioceses and those of Brandenburg, Mainz, Frankfort, etc., on 23 Sept. kept the feast of the "Second Assumption", or the "Fortieth Day of the Assumption" (double) believing, according to the revelations of St. Elizabeth of Schönau (d. 1165) and of St. Bertrand, O.C. (d. 1170), that the B.V. Mary was taken up to heaven on the fortieth day after her death (Grotefend, *Calendaria* 2, 136). The Brigittines kept the feast of the "Glorification of Mary" (double) 30 Aug., since St. Brigitta of Sweden says (Revel., VI, 1) that Mary was taken into heaven fifteen days after her departure (Colvenerius, *Cal. Mar.*, 30 Aug.). In Central America a special feast of the Coronation of Mary in heaven (double major) is celebrated 18 August. The city of Gerace in Calabria keeps three successive days with the rite of a double first class, commemorating: 15th of August, the death of Mary; 16th of August, her Coronation.

At Piazza, in Sicily, there is a commemoration of the Assumption of Mary (double second class) the 20th of February, the anniversary of the earthquake of 1743. A similar feast (double major with octave) is kept at Martano, Diocese of Otranto, in Apulia, 19th of November.

Note: By promulgating the Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, 1 November, 1950, Pope Pius XII declared infallibly that the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was a dogma of the Catholic Faith. Likewise, the Second Vatican Council taught in the Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium* that "the Immaculate Virgin, preserved free from all stain of original sin, was taken up body and soul into heavenly glory, when her earthly life was over, and exalted by the Lord as Queen over all things (n. 59)."

- **Take the Plunge: Living Baptism and Confirmation**

Fr. Ernesto Balducci, who died 20 years ago, said that Christianity would have died if it had locked himself in, like a cult, because it is universal - declined today as globalization - its main feature. A view also shared by Fr. Timothy Radcliffe in his book, "Being a Christian in the twenty-first century". He wrote,

"If you want Christianity to continue to live and grow, you must avoid two temptations: the first is to withdraw into a ghetto, the 'other is to assimilate into society and be enslaved by a secularized culture. We must rather be with people, share their problems. Putting ourselves at the side of our contemporaries, listening to the gospel and the teachings of the Church. And only then can we discover together a word that must be shared. "

This is reechoed today in his latest publication titled, "Take the Plunge: Living Baptism and Confirmation". As Christians, to live our Baptism is to overcome at the same time the challenges of secularism than that of fundamentalism, both deleterious and what is worse, profoundly contrary to the gospel. Because "God is present in every human being, supports his existence, he lives his ability to love, whatever his beliefs, even if it does not have anyone."

The word "catholic" means universal, says Fr. Radcliffe, former Master General of the Order of Preachers (1992-2001) and one of the most widely read Christian authors in the world. In a pluralistic society such as our contemporary world,

"We need to improve our "products" to maintain our market share "and that means reaching to the very essence of Christianity freed from the burdens accumulated throughout history. Faith does not focus first on what they believe, as we consumers at the supermarket of religions where one chooses according to his needs and preferences. Faith is primarily our response to the extraordinary discovery of God's love for us". Thus, even eternal life is not the icing on the cake of our lives, but a free gift that surpasses by far all the credit that we have accumulated.

A language which in our context may be a little 'light-hearted. Fr Radcliffe is a theologian with a key title in the New Testament, but at the same time, he is known for his great communication skills which makes him understood in the small parishes as well as the most prestigious universities.

Using the same pattern of an earlier text in which he analyzed the Mass - "Why go to Church?" (Why go to church? St. Paul 2009), here he examines the various phases of the celebration of baptism to help understand the full significance for the whole Christian life. As well as being part of the Church, a community of those called to holiness in the same extreme, without any barrier; man / woman, religious / secular, rich / poor, because the love of God, he explains, is Trinitarian and then of perfect communion.

Thus, "we must accept to be brothers and sisters of Borgia as Pope John XXIII, of the worst Inquisitor as Thomas Aquinas"

MARIA TERESA Pontara Pederiva, Rome

- **Patriarch in Paradox**

"Critics were almost entirely complimentary to what they were pleased to call my brilliant paradoxes; until they discovered that I really meant what I said"

Thus writes G.K. Chesterton, whose pen brought popular apologetics to perfection in paradox.

Now paradox is more than mere witticism, and Chesterton's exemplary specimens soar far higher than the lowly heights of rhetorical climax. But why was it Chesterton, the porcine apologist, and not, say, Bernard Shaw, the satirical socialist, who was crowned the "prince of paradox"? Historical

accident is not the answer. Christian doctrine is the apotheosis of paradox, and the perfection of the latter must be the preaching of the former.

There are no paradoxes more profound—or more true—than the deepest mysteries of our faith: God is one and three, Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, and, as we sing in the *Victimae*, “the Prince of life, who died, reigns immortal.” Like all paradoxes, these apparent contradictions need not be false. But unlike any other paradoxes, the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Resurrection are saving truths.

Today, as the Church celebrates Saint Dominic, the father of the friars preachers, it is fitting to reflect upon paradox and its relationship to Christianity, for Dominic himself, like the Christian doctrine he preached, was a paradox.

Compared to many other saints (indeed, compared to many other founders of religious orders), we know relatively little about the person, and personality, of Dominic de Guzman. This only serves to accentuate the apparent contradictions latent in what we do know: though the patriarch of preachers, he was rigorous in silence; a man of austerity, he was renowned for his warmth; devoted to study, he sold his books; ever firm in his purpose, he let himself be overruled.

For the sons and daughters of Saint Dominic, far from rendering him incomprehensible and inaccessible, these paradoxes provide a point of entry into his person, for they reveal the true nature of the Order he founded, and “the tree shall be known by its fruits.” If we find in him both contemplative canon and itinerant preacher, this is because his Order must also balance the tensions of the contemplative and active lives. If we find in him lowly poverty and high liturgy, this is because his Order must be energized by both ecclesial prayer and personal sanctity. If we find in him uncompromising austerity and generous dispensation, this is because he desired the members of his Order to be motivated by charity and virtue, not legalism or moralism.

Saint Dominic was undeniably a man of great charisma. But he subordinated that charisma to the charism of the Order he founded. Though great in sanctity, he did not focus the attention of others on the example of his holiness, but on the work of the Holy Preaching. And yet in so doing, he has become an example to all his sons and daughters. This is truly a paradox, and this is the man we celebrate today.

Let me end as we began, with Chesterton:

“There are two kinds of paradoxes. They are not so much the good and the bad, nor even the true and the false. Rather they are the fruitful and the barren; the paradoxes which produce life and the paradoxes that merely announce death.”

Perhaps the prince of paradox was not thinking of the patriarch of preachers when he penned these words, but there is no question of their applicability. St. Dominic was a fruitful paradox, and his fruit is Dominican life. In this, he points us toward that far deeper paradox, the truth to whom he was consecrated, whose fruit is eternal life.

Bro. Philip Neri Beese, OP

St Dominic and The Cross

Why does Bl. Fra Angelico so frequently depict Our Holy Father Dominic (1170-1221, feast – Aug. 8, patron of all priests of religious orders) at the foot of the Cross? After all, Angelico frequently paints St. Peter Martyr in the scenes surrounding Christ’s infancy. Thus, it would appear that Angelico had something particular in mind by depicting St. Peter Martyr in certain mysteries in the life of Christ and St. Dominic in others. But, what is it that binds Dominic to the Cross? His compassion.

St. Dominic had a great zeal for the conversion of sinners. He spent his life trying to bring heretical Albigensians back to the flock of the True Shepherd. After having traveled out of Osma where he was a Canon of St. Augustine, he saw how much people were starving for the truth. And, thus with his bishop’s permission, he remained in southern France seeking to lead them back to the sheepfold. One famous story during his travels with Bishop Diego involves St. Dominic staying up through the night conversing with a heretical inn keeper. By the end, the man was won back to the true faith.

St. Dominic was likewise known to weep for sinners. He would spend his nights in prayer weeping and crying out to the Lord to have mercy on sinners. He was so often heard beseeching the Lord, “What will become of sinners?”

Throughout his life of traveling around Europe by foot, St. Dominic lived a life of mercy. He experienced the Lord’s own mercy in his life and sought to share that with those to whom he preached. By the time of his death, he was known to be a man of great compassion, seeking to draw sinners away from the wolves of heresy and back to the flock of Christ.

On this great feast day and through the intercession of Holy Father Dominic, may we too be given the grace to spend ourselves for the conversion of sinners and lead them back to the true fold of the Church.

O God, you were pleased to enlighten your church with the merits and teaching of the blessed Dominic, your confessor and our father; grant, at his intercession, that she may not be wanting in temporal help, and may always increase in spiritual growth. Through Christ our Lord.

Bro. Peter Martyr Yungwirth, OP

- **St Dominic's Legacy**

We Dominicans have not always been very good at promoting devotion to Our Holy Father St Dominic: that’s why our constitutions explicitly remind the brethren of our duty to foster a deeper appreciation of St Dominic’s life and ministry. Even at his birthplace in Caleruega, it feels like there is greater devotion to his mother, Blessed Jane of Aza, than there is to St Dominic, whose legacy as a preacher and founder of a religious order has left a deep impression on the history and intellectual culture of Europe. There is, however, something appropriate about this: St Dominic was, above all, a preacher and the life of good Christian preachers consists largely in learning to point away from themselves, so as to become translucent to the light of Christ’s truth, and repeat John the Baptist’s “He must increase; I must decrease” (Jn 3:30) in each successive era. So it is that St Dominic, the founder of the Order of Preachers, never draws attention to himself, but - as his early biographers observed - lived an entirely God-centred life, speaking only to God or about God.

In Segovia too, the cave in which St Dominic devoted himself to prayer and penitential exercises is now hidden in the middle of a modern campus university. Although Dominic probably wouldn’t recognise the modern academy, his motley band of sons - who have continued century after century to follow in his footsteps - have contributed much to the development of the university system. The

presence of the cueva, a place of prayer and penance, at the heart of the University in Segovia is a reminder, however, that for Dominicans, study is always understood as a spiritual and an ascetic discipline. It may seem that the cave is the grit around which the pearl of the University develops, but in fact our study is the grit, and our preaching the pearl. Thus for Dominic study was not an end in itself, nor was it primarily about amassing facts, gaining advanced qualifications, or becoming learned, but rather about discerning the voice of God, speaking primarily through the Scriptures and Tradition of the Church, but also in - and to - our culture. This listening, because it is a listening to the voice of God, is one that demands obedience, an obedience which sends forth the listener for preaching and teaching. Throughout Dominic's life, and the life of the brothers gathered around him, listening and preaching always go together: Dominicans preach as listeners, and listen as preachers, for no man is sent as an apostle without having first been called as a disciple.

From the outside, I expect that from time-to-time it seems like St Dominic has been eclipsed by the Order he founded. Sometimes, I suspect, it seems like we talk about our brother St Thomas Aquinas more than we do about our father St Dominic. Even during his own lifetime, Dominic's vision that lay brothers should assume the burdens of leadership, in order to free the ordained for preaching, was rejected by his brothers meeting in General Chapter, a decision which Dominic accepted in humility. I suspect many subsequent Dominican superiors will have tasted such 'defeat' at the hands of the brothers, but this isn't really a defeat at all, since our way of life commits us to discerning the will of God as a community of brothers. What Dominic bequeathed to the Order, and which we must never lose, is the sense of the radical urgency of our task. The type of urgency with which one puts water on a burning building is the type of urgency with which the sons of St Dominic approach this task of prayerful preaching: it is the single priority of our lives, and it is in following Christ in the task of proclaiming his Good News that we - like St Dominic - find our essential identity.

This sense of urgency does not derive from an obsession with doctrinal purity. Rather, St Dominic saw with great acuity that the world in which we live is the very world in which we encounter God, and that it is this simple principle that is so often threatened. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not an event in the same order as the resurrection of Lazarus: Christ does not return to the same old unchanged creation, but to a new and transfigured one, shot through with new possibility. No matter what new and innovative ways we find to scourge our world with the sins of violence and hatred, these can be healed and corrected by a faithful preaching of the Gospel. This Good News that we proclaim is not an abstract truth, but one that has brought us freedom, and a gift that we share with our brothers and the world, "that our joy may be complete" (Jn 15:11). Thus, like St Dominic, our lives together should be lives of joy and laughter. Ours is not the cheap laughter of the drunkard, but the costly laughter, purchased for us by Christ's passion and given freely to us, the laughter of those intoxicated by the sharing of God's word, and thus of a joy that is born of authentic hope, itself born of faith in the gospel.

So, while there are very few people who espouse the strange doctrines of the Manicheans that Dominic dedicated his life to preaching against in the South of France, there are plenty who follow them in denying the possibility of God's presence in the world. Many of our fellow countrymen stand on one of two metaphorical beaches: either they stand with Matthew Arnold on Dover Beach, watching the tide of faith apparently recede, or they stand with the Manic Street Preachers on Porthmadog Sands, singing 'this is my truth, tell me yours'. At the heart of both these positions - the modern and the postmodern - there is a rejection of the presence of God and his Truth in the world. Supported by the prayers of Our Holy Father, then, may we be faithful in our task of preaching, pointing out the presence of God in our midst, that - in the word of Francis Thomas' poem - Jacob's ladder is pitched "betwixt heaven and Charing Cross", and "Lo! Christ walks upon the water, not of Genesareth but Thames".

Bro. Oliver Keenan, OP

- **Our Blessed Grandmother Jane?**

If Dominicans refer to St. Dominic as “Our Holy Father Dominic”, does that mean that we can refer to his mother, Bl. Jane (12th century, feast – Aug. 2) as “Our Blessed Grandmother Jane”? While that question doesn’t necessarily need to be answered, it does present some provoking thoughts. What reverence should Dominicans show to the mother of St. Dominic? In a way, is she also responsible for bringing about the Order since she brought about the founder?

Bl. Jane is thought to have come from both noble and saintly blood, possibly being related to both St. Louis the King of France and St. Ferdinand of Spain. She married an upstanding Christian man and gave birth to three men who all became priests, including Bl. Mannes, one of the first Dominicans. After her first two sons were born, she went to the Monastery of Silos and prayed a novena to St. Dominic of Silos. Toward the end of the novena, he appeared to her and told her that she would conceive a son who would be a light of the Church and a terror of heretics.

Soon after, this prophecy began to take shape. As Bl. Jordan tells us in his Libellus:

Before his mother conceived him, she saw in a vision that she would bear in her womb a dog who, with a burning torch in his mouth and leaping from her womb, seemed to set the whole earth on fire. This was to signify that her child would be an eminent preacher who, by ‘barking’ sacred knowledge, would rouse to vigilance souls drowsy with sin, as well as scatter throughout the world the fire which the Lord Jesus Christ came to cast upon the earth.

While we cannot necessarily say that St. Dominic became a saint and the founder of Dominicans because of his mother, it is safe to suppose that his upbringing could not have hurt. Bl. Jane’s example and the stories that Dominic probably heard about his mother’s visions could have played an important role in helping him to become the saintly preacher that the world now knows. Thus, it might be fair to have a pious love for her, the grandmother of the Dominican Order.

Our Blessed Grandmother Jane, pray for us.

O God, who didst wonderfully make known to Thy handmaid, Blessed Jane, the grace of the heavenly calling of her son, Dominic, we beseech Thee that, imitating her and her son thus foreshown to her, we may, by the loving intercession of them both, receive everlasting rewards. Through Christ our Lord.

Bro. Peter Martyr Yungwirth, OP

- **“The Church’s Doctrines, Liturgy and Laws are not subject to Personal Preferences”**

These were the words of Bishop Badejo at the ordination of 9 Dominican brothers of the Province of Saint Joseph the Worker (Nigeria-Ghana). frs Cornelius Ewuoso, Gabriel Odin, Augustine Awodipe, John-Mark Igboalusi, Ignatius Saiki, and Frederick Tettey were ordained to diaconate while frs Dominic Okoye, Felix Udolisa, and Joseph Okotie were ordained to the priesthood on Saturday July 21, 2012.

In his homily, entitled “The Priesthood: Spirit, Soul and Values,” the ordaining prelate, Most Rev Emmanuel Ade Badejo, the Catholic Bishop of Oyo Diocese, Nigeria, underscored the need for the ordinands to remain the light and true heralds of the gospel in the face of the encircling gloom and grand conspiracy against the word of God in our contemporary world.

“I wish to state the obvious brothers by saying that you belong to a different class and calling. You have been called, will now be ordained, and commissioned and then sent forth. That was the procedure of all authentic discipleship in the Scriptures. Yes, you are in the world but not of it and it is Christ who has chosen you and no one else (Jn. 15:16). As Catholic clergymen, you must be faithful to the church’s doctrine, liturgy and laws which are not subject to personal preferences. You are called to shun the crass materialism, the discrimination, the narrow minded tribalism, the idealistic and ideological barrenness and epicurean subsistence that have compromised our existence. In the Spirit of St. Dominic, you are ordained to preach the pristine Christ to others and defend his Church from heresy. Such a noble calling!”

He further reminded the ordinands,

“A priest’s life must demonstrate that it can indeed be fun to live the evangelical counsels of poverty obedience and chastity and for emphasis, all in Christian charity. Yes use your I Pad, I Phone, I tune and I everything. But do not forget your capacity to turn them into instruments of faith sharing, faith deepening and of prayer. Use them to research into the depths of spirituality and salvation so that others can come closer to God. Yes, use them such that they can all serve him who alone could ever be called ‘I AM.’ Build e-libraries, read e-books, send e-mails, play e-games but put at the top of your priorities the only one who ever was called E-MMANUEL. He is the one who has called you and will be your surest companion. Trust him and you will all have a bright productive future in His vineyard.”

As typical of ordinations in Nigeria, there were festivities with family and friends immediately after the Eucharistic celebrations. With the ordination of 3 new priests and 6 new deacons, the Dominican province of Nigeria and Ghana now has a total of 100 priest-brothers affiliated to it in addition to 7 priest- brothers assigned to the province from other Dominican entities.

By Bro. Samuel Onyiba, OP

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## ***Official news***

- **A New Provincial for India**

The brothers of the Province of India have elected Fr John Kusumalayan, OP as their new Prior Provincial for the next four years. His election has been approved by the Master of the Order. He succeeds Fr Joseph Karukayil.

Fr John was born in 1961. He entered the Order and made his first profession in 1982. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1990 after his basic formation. Since his ordination, he has been involved in both pastoral and teaching apostolates. He teaches moral theology at St Charles Seminary, Nagpur, India where he was vice-rector until 2002 when he left for further studies in Belgium. He is a devoted formator and counselor. In 2011, he published a book titled, Human Right: Individual or/and Group Rights?

From the Curia, we wish him a successful tenure.

- **Farewell to Fr Kees Keijsper, OP**

After 48 years, the brothers of the Vicariate General of Southern Africa bids Fr Kees Keijsper farewell. Fr Kees who has just turned 75 and celebrated his 50th anniversary of priestly ordination is retiring and returning to Holland.

He was born on the 20th of December, 1936 in Holland. He entered the Order and made his first profession on the 18th of September, 1956. At the completion of his basic formation, he was ordained to the priesthood on the 19th of July, 1962. He did further studies at the Aquinas Preaching Institute in St Louis, USA.

Fr Kees is a pioneer of the Order in South Africa. He was a founding member of the local Dominican preaching team. As the one responsible for the studies of the brethren in South Africa he took a lively interest in their studies and raised the money needed especially for their postgraduate studies. He is a member of the Economic Council and worked tirelessly to raise funds for the Vicariate. He also served on the Vicariate Council for several years.

Fr Kees spent most of his priestly ministry in the diocese of Kroonstad. There he worked in many parishes and was involved in the training of deacons and lay ministers. As a born catechist, he spent much energy in introducing Family and Community Catechesis to the country through the SACBC. He encouraged initiative and leadership. He headed the Resource Centre in Welkom and also the Thabiso Skills Training Centre. He was a man full of ideas and was a consultant in the diocese and to several bishops over the years. He also assisted the diocese greatly in fund raising.

After a very fulfilling and committed pastoral life in South Africa, Fr Kees has received and is still receiving good will messages from all especially from the brothers in the Vicariate and the entire diocese of Kroonstad and other dioceses. Fr Gabriel Samba, OP (Socius for Africa) expressed the following in his good will message;

“We thank our Brother Kees for what he has been for us all and for all he has done in the Vicariate General of Southern African as well as for Inter-African collaboration. We wish him all the best and may God continue to bless him abundantly”.

From the curia also, we wish Fr Kees a tranquil rest and good health in his retirement.

- **Bishop Albert-Marie de Monléon, OP Retires**

The Holy Father Benedict XVI has accepted the resignation of Bishop Albert-Marie Joseph Cyrille de Monléon, OP from the pastoral governance of the Diocese of Meaux (France) in accordance with canon 401 § 1 of the Code of Canon Law.

Bishop de Monléon was born in Paris on January 20, 1937. He entered the Dominican Order in the Province of France in 1957 and after his basic formation, he was ordained a priest in 1964. In 1988, he was appointed the Bishop of Pamiers, France and was ordained for the same diocese on October 1, 1988. He was there for 11 years until 1999 when he was appointed the Bishop of Meaux. He was the Bishop of Meaux until his retirement.

As a priest, he was the theological and spiritual director of the priests and seminarians of the then newly established Emmanuel Community (1974-1988). As a bishop, he was a member of the

Doctrinal Commission of the Roman Congregation for the Divine Worship. In the French Bishops' Conference, he chaired the Liturgical and Sacramental Commission and was also a member of their Doctrinal Commission.

From the curia, we wish him God's favour in his retirement.

- **Bishop Jorge Leonardo, OP Retires**

According to the Vatican Information Services (VIS), the Holy Father has accepted the resignation of Bishop Leonardo Gomez Serna Jorge, OP from the care of the Diocese of Magangué, Colombia.

Bishop Jorge Leonardo was born on November 7, 1942 at Marinilla. He joined the Dominican Order and was ordained a priest on August 22, 1968. He was appointed the prelate of Bertrania en el Catatumbo in 1980 and later Prelate of Tibù in 1985. He was ordained a bishop on July 9, 1985. He was the bishop of Tibù until 1986 when he was appointed the bishop of Socorro y San Gil. He became the bishop of Magangué in 2001 and was there until his resignation.

Between 1986 to 2001, Bishop Jorge Leonardo was a tireless apostle of peace. He led the implantation of the Process of Renewal and Evangelism. He saw to the completion of many projects including the headquarters of the Major Seminary. He was constantly on pastoral visits to his parishes and ordained many priest even for missions to other dioceses.

From the Curia, we wish him God's favour in his retirement.

### ***Calendar of the Master: September 2012***

- 3-14: Plenary Council Meeting
- 7-9: Meeting with Polish Nuns
- 17-19: Meeting with Spanish Provincials
- 22-23: USA Nuns Assembly
- 25-3 October: Visitation to Porto Rico and Venezuela